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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 AMMAN 005238

SIPDIS

NEA FOR LAROCO, NEA/PPD FOR MACINNES, BOURGEOIS, EUR/ERA
FOR ALLEGRONE

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TAGS: [KPAO](#) [PREL](#) [OPRC](#)

SUBJECT: DRAWING A ROADMAP FOR IRAQ PUBLIC DIPLOMACY:
JORDANIAN PERSPECTIVE

REF: A. SECSTATE 169975

- [1](#)B. AMMAN 05196
- [1](#)C. AMMAN 05168
- [1](#)D. AMMAN 05131
- [1](#)E. AMMAN 05173

Classified By: HMAHONEY, PAO, FOR REASON 1.5B

(C) SUMMARY. THE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ENVIRONMENT IN JORDAN REGARDING U.S. POLICY TOWARDS IRAQ IS FRAUGHT WITH SUSPICION AND ANGER ABOUT PERCEIVED U.S. AMBITIONS TOWARDS THE REGION. JORDANIANS WIDELY BELIEVE THAT U.S. POLICY IN THE REGION IS A PRODUCT OF ITS STRONGLY PRO-ISRAELI STANCE WITHOUT REGARD FOR ARAB INTERESTS. JORDANIANS ARE ALSO DEEPLY WORRIED ABOUT THE IMPACT OF U.S. MILITARY ACTION IN IRAQ (WHICH MOST THINK IS ALMOST INEVITABLE) ON JORDAN'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING. JORDAN'S ECONOMIC TIES TO IRAQ ARE CLOSER THAN THOSE OF ANY OTHER ARAB COUNTRY. LINKAGES OF KINSHIP, EDUCATION AND CULTURE ARE ALSO STRONG, AND SECOND ONLY TO THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PALESTINIANS IN THEIR EMOTIONAL INTENSITY. WE CAN EXPECT THE GOJ TO ATTEMPT TO DAMPEN POPULAR EMOTIONS, BUT OFFICIAL PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON U.S. ACTIONS WILL BE CAREFULLY CALIBRATED TO AVOID PROVOKING OR WORSENING POPULAR EXPRESSIONS OF ANGER AGAINST BOTH THE U.S. AND THE GOVERNMENT. SHOULD U.S. MILITARY ACTION OCCUR, THE EMOTIONAL REACTION WILL MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO GET OUR MESSAGE HEARD, ESPECIALLY IN THE INITIAL STAGES OF ENGAGEMENT. NEVERTHELESS, WE MUST MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO STATE OUR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY MESSAGE LOUD AND CLEAR AND PURSUE A LONG-RANGE STRATEGY OF EXCHANGES AND DIALOGUE IN ORDER TO LIMIT THE DAMAGE TO OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JORDAN. END SUMMARY

[1](#)2. THE CLIMATE: A WITCHES' BREW

(SBU) SEVERAL EMOTIONAL AND WIDELY HELD VIEWS OF U.S. MOTIVATIONS TOWARDS THE ARAB AND ISLAMIC WORLD COMBINE TO PRODUCE A STRONG REACTION AGAINST OUR EFFORTS TO CHANGE THE IRAQI REGIME AND ELIMINATE IRAQ'S POTENTIAL TO THREATEN US WITH WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION. IN FACT, JORDANIANS ARE LARGELY UNCONCERNED ABOUT SADDAM'S ACQUISITION OF WMD. EVEN IF HE GETS THEM, THEY ARGUE, SO WHAT? OTHER EQUALLY DANGEROUS COUNTRIES HAVE WMD OR THE CAPACITY TO BUILD THEM, MOST NOTABLY ISRAEL, BUT ALSO SYRIA, AND NORTH KOREA. JORDANIANS BEGIN FROM THE ASSUMPTION THAT U.S. PLANS TO INVADE IRAQ ARE MOTIVATED BY A DESIRE TO PROTECT ISRAEL, DOMINATE THE OIL-RICH REGION AND ACT OUT FEAR AND THIRST FOR REVENGE AFTER SEPT. 11. WHATEVER EFFORTS SADDAM MAY HAVE MADE TO ACQUIRE WMD, JORDANIANS DOUBT THAT IRAQ POSES ANY REAL DANGER TO THE UNITED STATES, AND BELIEVE THAT THE DETERRENCE ARGUMENT IS A PRETEXT. THE LOCAL MEDIA ROUTINELY PORTRAY THE U.S. ACTIONS AFTER SEPT. 11 AS AN EFFORT TO EXPLOIT A GENUINE HUMAN TRAGEDY AS A PRETEXT TO GO AFTER ARABS AND MUSLIMS WHO STAND IN OUR WAY. JORDANIAN COMMENTATORS ON THE U.S. DOMESTIC SCENE WARN OF GROWING HOSTILITY AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ISLAM AND ARABS IN U.S. SOCIETY: A BETRAYAL OF AMERICAN IDEALS OF FREEDOM AND EQUALITY.

(C) UNDERLYING THE HOSTILITY AND SUSPICION IS THE CONVICTION, FREQUENTLY EXPRESSED IN THE PRESS, THAT THE U.S. VIEWS THE REGION AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM THROUGH THE ISRAELI PRISM, AND IS INCAPABLE OR UNWILLING TO SYSTEMATICALLY FACTOR IN ARAB INTERESTS. MANY CONTACTS TELL US THAT THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE IS BIGGER THAN IRAQ IN THE JORDANIAN MIND, AND THAT THE PERCEPTION OF U.S. BIAS TOWARDS ISRAEL DETERMINES POPULAR ATTITUDES TOWARDS AMERICAN ACTIONS VIS A VIS IRAQ. ANY ISRAELI INVOLVEMENT IN AN ATTACK ON IRAQ WOULD SOLIDIFY THE BELIEF THAT AMERICAN AND ISRAELI GOALS ARE IDENTICAL. DRAWING ON STATEMENTS BY ISRAELI JOURNALISTS AND POLITICIANS, SOME JORDANIANS FEAR THAT THE SHARON GOVERNMENT WILL USE THE COVER OF U.S. MILITARY ACTION AGAINST IRAQ TO CRUSH THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY AND EXPEL LARGE NUMBERS OF PALESTINIANS INTO JORDAN. A PALESTINIAN INFLUX COMBINED WITH A SIMILAR MOVEMENT OF REFUGEES FROM IRAQ, THEY FEAR, WOULD LEAD TO WIDESPREAD ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL TURMOIL. ADD TO THIS THE CUT-OFF OF CHEAP IRAQI OIL AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE IRAQI IMPORT MARKET AND THE NEAR-TERM PICTURE LOOKS BLEAK FOR THE ORDINARY JORDANIAN CITIZEN.

(C) WE CAN EXPECT THE GOJ TO PURSUE A CAREFULLY CRAFTED PUBLIC LINE DESIGNED TO DEFLECT POPULAR DISSATISFACTION WITH

GOJ POLICY. THERE WILL PROBABLY BE MORE OFFICIAL STATEMENTS AND EDITORIALS ADVISING JORDANIANS TO CONSIDER THEIR OWN NATIONAL INTERESTS AHEAD OF THE IRAQI OR PALESTINIAN ISSUES AND ALLUDING TO THE BENEFITS OF THE U.S.-JORDANIAN OFFICIAL RELATIONSHIP. BUT GOVERNMENT-OWNED OR DOMINATED MEDIA WILL CONTINUE TO BE CHARACTERIZED BY EMOTIONAL STATEMENTS AGAINST U.S. POLICY. LIKE OTHER ARAB GOVERNMENTS, THE GOJ HAS BEGUN TO PUT SOME EFFORT INTO TEMPERING THESE INFLAMMATORY ARGUMENTS (SEE REFS B-D) BUT ITS PUBLIC SUPPORT WILL NECESSARILY BE LIMITED LEST IT BE PERCEIVED AS AN AMERICAN CLIENT.

13. PUBLIC AFFAIRS APPROACH:

(U) OUR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY APPROACH SHOULD BE THREE-FOLD: A) PRESENT LOUD AND CLEAR MESSAGES ON U.S. POLICY AND SWIFTLY COUNTER DISINFORMATION; B) BE GOOD LISTENERS AND SUSTAIN THE DIALOGUE C) AFTER THE DUST SETTLES, CONTINUE AND EXPAND THE INSTITUTIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL TIES, ESPECIALLY WITH YOUTH.

(U) A. MESSAGES TO BE DELIVERED BY SPOKESPERSONS AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE WHITE HOUSE, STATE DEPARTMENT, DOD, NSC AND RELATED AGENCIES:

C)--OUR GOAL IS TO RE-INTEGRATE IRAQ INTO THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY FOR THE BENEFIT OF ITS PEOPLE. THIS WOULD END SANCTIONS AND ISOLATION AND REVIVE IRAQ'S GREAT POTENTIAL AS A FULL PARTNER IN THE REGION. WHILE WE ARE COMMITTED TO IRAQ'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, RELATIVE PROSPERITY AND STABILITY IN THE FREE KURDISH AREAS SHOW WHAT COULD BE DONE IF THE WHOLE COUNTRY WERE FREE OF SADDAM'S GRIP. (NOTE: ENDING THE SANCTIONS IS THE ONLY SILVER LINING WHICH JORDANIAN COMMENTATORS HAVE SEEN IN A U.S. MILITARY STRIKE WHICH TOPPLES SADDAM. EVIDENCE THAT IRAQIS WELCOME SADDAM'S DOWNFALL IF OR WHEN IT HAPPENS WOULD ALSO HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT.)

(U)--THE U.S. WILL NOT RELENT IN ITS EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT AND TO PURSUE A LASTING AND JUST TWO-STATE SOLUTION BASED ON UNSCR'S 242, 338, 1397, THE CONCEPT OF LAND-FOR-PEACE. NOR WILL WE ALLOW ANY PARTY TO EXPLOIT THE IRAQ SITUATION TO CHANGE FACTS ON THE GROUND. FOR EXAMPLE, THE U.S. FIRMLY REJECTS EXPULSION OF POPULATIONS AND WILL NOT ACCEPT IT. ISRAEL IS NOT PART OF OUR MILITARY COALITION AGAINST SADDAM. (USG SPOKESPERSONS WILL NEED TO IMMEDIATELY COUNTER ANY STATEMENTS TO THE CONTRARY, E.G. FROM THE ISRAELI MEDIA.)

(U)--THOUGH WE MAY DISAGREE ABOUT STRATEGY, THE WORLD COMMUNITY SUPPORTS OUR PREMISE THAT WMD IN SADDAM'S HANDS POSE A GRAVE THREAT NOT ONLY TO THE U.S. BUT TO THE REGION, AND MUST BE REMOVED WITHOUT DELAY. THE U.S. IS NOT ACTING UNILATERALLY. (HERE WE SHOULD EMPHASIZE SUPPORTIVE STATEMENTS FROM THE U.N., OTHER UNSC MEMBERS, STRATEGIC STUDIES CENTERS, THINK TANKS ETC. RELEASE OF DOCUMENTATION OR OTHER "PROOF" OF IRAQ'S CONTINUING WMD PROGRAMS WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL.)

(U)--ANY ACTION AGAINST IRAQ IS AIMED AT SADDAM HUSSEIN, NOT PART OF A DOMINO-STRATEGY TO REMOVE OTHER UNFRIENDLY REGIMES, E.G. SYRIA AND IRAN.

(U)--SEPT. 11 HAD A PROFOUND IMPACT ON THE AMERICAN PSYCHE, BUT DID NOT CREATE A CLIMATE OF HATRED AND INTOLERANCE TOWARDS ARABS OR ISLAM. IN FACT, AMERICAN INTEREST IN ISLAM AND DESIRE FOR DIALOGUE INCREASED RADICALLY, PROVIDING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR BETTER MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING. AMERICANS ARE COMMITTED TO EXPANDING THAT DIALOGUE.

(U)--THE U.S. AND OUR ALLIES WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO PREVENT ECONOMIC DISLOCATION TO OUR FRIENDS IN THE REGION. THROUGH OUR TRADE AND AID APPROACHES WE HAVE A STRONG PARTNERSHIP TO ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE ARAB WORLD WHICH HAS REAPED SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS AND IS ONE OF THE MAIN HOPES FOR THE FUTURE GENERATIONS.

1B. SUSTAINING THE DIALOGUE

(U) IT WILL BE CRUCIAL FOR AMERICA TO BE PERCEIVED AS LISTENING TO OUR ALLIES IN THE REGION AND SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING THEIR VIEWS AND INTERESTS EVEN WHEN THE RHETORIC AND POPULAR EMOTIONS ESCALATE. EMBASSY OFFICERS AND OTHER USG OFFICIALS VISITING THE REGION SHOULD ENGAGE IN PUBLIC DIALOGUE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, BOTH THROUGH THE MEDIA AND WITH UNIVERSITIES, NGO'S AND OTHER PUBLIC FORA. WE ESPECIALLY NEED ARABIC-SPEAKING SPOKESPERSONS AND OBJECTIVE COMMENTATORS TO APPEAR ON SATELLITE TV TALK-SHOWS TO COUNTER THE EXTREME MISCHARACTERIZATIONS OF THE U.S. THIS IS ESPECIALLY NECESSARY TO COUNTER THE WIDESPREAD IMPRESSION THAT ARAB-AMERICANS AND MUSLIM AMERICANS LIVE IN FEAR OF REPRISAL OR OFFICIAL HARASSMENT IN THE U.S. MANY JORDANIANS WHO STRONGLY DISAGREE WITH OUR POLICIES NEVERTHELESS PIN THEIR LONG-RANGE HOPES ON POSITIVE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. BUT THOSE HOPES WILL DIE IF THEY ARE NOT ABLE TO TALK TO US AND VENT THEIR EMOTIONS.

(U)WE WILL ALSO NEED RAPID RESPONSES TO COUNTER

DISINFORMATION FROM IRAQIS AND OTHERS. FOR EXAMPLE, WE CAN EXPECT MASSIVE EXAGGERATIONS OF CIVILIAN CASUALTIES AND DISINFORMATION ABOUT ISRAELI INVOLVEMENT. WE WILL NEED THE FACTS VIA USG OFFICIAL RESPONSES ASAP. THE LONDON INFORMATION CENTER IS AN EXCELLENT MEANS OF PROVIDING THIS INFORMATION AND SO ARE OUR INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTERS AT THE POSTS.

(U) TO COUNTER THE MISPERCEPTION THAT AMERICANS HATE ISLAM AND ARABS, WE WILL NEED ARAB-AMERICAN AND MUSLIM-AMERICAN SPEAKERS AND OTHERS WHO CAN FORGE LINKAGES BETWEEN THEIR ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITIES AND JORDANIANS. FOR EXAMPLE, WE ARE SENDING TO THE U.S. A GROUP OF INTERNATIONAL VISITORS FROM SHARIA' SCHOOLS AND OTHER ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS. THEY WILL MEET WITH U.S. INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE GEORGETOWN CENTER FOR MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING. SEVERAL JORDANIAN NGO'S HAVE EXPRESSED STRONG INTEREST IN SPEAKER EXCHANGE PROGRAMS THAT WOULD GIVE THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK DIRECTLY TO AMERICAN AUDIENCES. MANY JORDANIANS ARE EAGER TO PRESENT THEIR RELIGION AND SOCIETY TO AMERICAN AUDIENCES AND WE SHOULD SUPPORT THIS TWO-WAY EXCHANGE WHEREVER POSSIBLE BOTH THROUGH USG EXCHANGE PROGRAMS AND FUNDING FOR NGO'S.

1C. EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER EXCHANGE LINKAGES

(U) OUR EXCHANGE AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS WILL NO DOUBT SUFFER AT LEAST TEMPORARILY FROM ANY MILITARY ACTION IN IRAQ. WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN SOME CONTACTS DECLINING SPEAKER AND OTHER PROGRAMS AS A RESULT OF THEIR OBJECTIONS TO U.S. POLICY TOWARDS THE PALESTINIANS AND IRAQ. NEVERTHELESS WE BELIEVE THAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER EXCHANGES WILL ENDURE AS JORDANIANS REFLECT ON THEIR LONG-RUN INTERESTS. WE SHOULD BE IN A POSITION TO OFFER A SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL AND CITIZEN EXCHANGES, ENGLISH INSTRUCTION, AND COOPERATION IN THE FIELDS OF CIVIC EDUCATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY AND OTHER AREAS WITH A SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON REACHING YOUTH. AND WE SHOULD NOT FORGET THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL PROGRAMMING IN THE FIELDS OF FILM, DRAMA, MUSIC, DANCE LITERATURE AND THE ARTS. THE LATTER AREA REMAINS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT AS THE GOVERNMENT CRACKS DOWN ON POLITICAL DISCUSSION LEAVING THE ARTS AS ONE OF THE ONLY VEHICLES OF FREE EXPRESSION.

BERRY